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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**ENTER THE DRAGON:
CHINA REGAINS ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD AND
A U.S. STRATEGY FOR COOPERATION AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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27 October 2010

Abstract

Enter the Dragon: China Regains Its Place in the World and A U.S. Strategy for Cooperation and Confidence-Building: The People's Republic of China is recovering the global role it held for much of the world's history. The rest of the world must adjust to China's return to the world stage. However, a close study of Chinese history and China's wars reveals that China has not sought to project its power far beyond its home territories. Chinese dynasties and governments have found the challenge of maintaining a unified China a constant struggle and have not sought to establish domination over territories far from the Chinese homeland by military means. The U.S. and the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command face the difficult challenge of maintaining a strong U.S. presence in East and Southeast Asia while China recovers its strong regional role. That process should be characterized by competition and cooperation and not by military confrontation. The U.S. and China are so closely linked economically that a major war would cause incalculable damage to the world's economy. With the skillful application of a range of confidence-building measures, accompanied by a strong U.S. military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural presence in Asia, PACOM can lead the peaceful return of China to world affairs.

The Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command (CDRUSPACOM) is, in effect, charged by the U.S. government with leading the U.S. military's adjustment to the return of the People's Republic of China to the world stage. In a very real sense, China, after her "Century of Humiliation," is merely recovering the major power status in political, military, and economic terms she enjoyed throughout much of her history. Both the world, and the United States as the leading world power, will need to find how best to adjust to China's return. This adjustment should be done with the awareness that throughout the millennia of her history, China has pursued a defensive strategy in order to protect and preserve her interests. China has not pursued policies aimed at projecting her power far from her shores and has long focused on the very difficult task of maintaining her own unity, in the face of both external and internal threats. It is never easy for nations to adjust to any "new" power asserting its interests. Although adjusting to China is unavoidable, it is by no means foreordained that these adjustments need lead to military confrontation. That CDRUSPACOM will face a "China Threat" is far from inevitable. It is important for PACOM to have a deep understanding of China's view of the world, including China's history, both ancient and modern, and detailed knowledge of China's modern wars. The paper will analyze these factors and recommend, therefore, that CDRUSPACOM should pursue a variety of options to build military-to-military cooperation with China, build confidence in U.S.-China military relations, and explore ways of cooperatively pursuing the two nations' common interests—turning a perceived "China Threat" into a "China Opportunity." The paper will conclude with a menu of options on how best to do this.

PACOM Looks West

According to its April 2009 report, “Strategy: Partnership, Readiness, Presence,” the U.S. Pacific Command’s mission is to protect and defend U.S. territory, people and interests and: “enhance stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win.”¹ The PACOM Strategy specifies that it is based on partnership, readiness, and presence.² PACOM’s Area of Responsibility covers 36 countries, from Oceania through North East and South East Asia, to South Asia. Among its expected challenges, PACOM includes transnational violent extremism, state and non-state actors sponsoring terrorism and/or pursuing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), proliferation, piracy, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and serious environmental degradation.³ Among its assumptions, is that PACOM expects China to “continue to improve its military capabilities and its economic and political influence will continue to grow.”⁴

It will be argued that a China seeking greater political and economic influence in Asia and beyond, in many instances, faces the same challenges that PACOM does. This should provide growing opportunities for cooperation, coordination and confidence-building between the U.S. and China, efforts that will place military-to-military contacts in the forefront. As stressed by then-CDRUSPACOM Admiral Keating in March 2008 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, “our military-to-military relationship with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is not to the level we desire...we will continue to pursue a mature, constructive relationship with [China]...as the best means to reduce the chance of miscalculation, increase our mutual understanding, and encourage cooperation on areas of common concern.”⁵ PACOM carries out its mission as a Geographic Combatant Command, bringing together U.S. Navy,

Marine, Army, and Air Force units, in addition to coordination with the U.S. State Department and other agencies.

Some look at China's modernization of her military and see only a looming threat. It is indisputable that China is carrying out a major modernization and expansion of her military capabilities, particularly in naval capabilities. As summarized by the Congressional Research Service, the range of programs being pursued by China include anti-ship ballistic missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles, submarines, aircraft carriers, surface combatants, amphibious ships, and maritime surveillance and targeting systems. These increased capabilities are seen as being aimed at deterring U.S. intervention in a conflict involving Taiwan, at backing up Chinese territorial and maritime claims, including on areas of the South China Sea, and at protecting China's sea lines of communication.⁶ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen has been quoted as being worried by China's "heavy investments" in sea and air capabilities and moving "from being curious to being genuinely concerned" about the perceived discrepancies between China's stated goals and her military build-up.⁷

There is no doubt that China is moving to exert what she perceives as her interests in East Asia. This paper will not dispute the argument that the U.S. must continue to watch carefully Chinese developments and to maintain a strong U.S. military, diplomatic, and economic presence in the region. However, the paper will posit that it is inevitable that Chinese power in the region will grow and this assertion of China's historic interests should not be viewed as a threat but as a challenge for peaceful cooperation, competition and discussion.

The Weight of History

China can lay a strong claim to having the world's oldest civilization. She certainly enjoys the longest cultural and linguistic continuity of any major region of the world. Chinese history has been characterized by long periods of cultural and political stability, followed by political change as dynasties have withered and collapsed. Long periods of ~~war~~lordism" or peasant uprisings have alternated with periods of central control, often imposed by means of military victory. These cycles of history have flowed over China's five-thousand-year-old cultural heartland. Deserts to the north and west limited Chinese political expansion in those directions while in the south, a series of strong cultures rose and fell, under varying levels of Chinese control or influence. During periods of political unity in China, China used military force on her periphery to extend control over her neighbors; when central control collapsed, most military activity occurred in the Chinese heartland, as forces vied to restore central government and seek to launch new dynasties.⁸ These centripetal and centrifugal forces continued alternatively to hold sway through the millennia of Chinese history, down to the modern day.

China's military moved on foot, with cavalry forces providing offense and mobility. When China lost control of her steppes, her cavalry was weakened and her military was at the mercy of the often-mounted ~~barbarians~~" beyond her frontiers. In these periods, China became more reliant on defensive infrastructure, including on the massive ramparts of many different Great Walls. Canals and granaries were established to support both commerce and the military. However, after the Opium War of 1839-1842 against the British Empire, China entered her ~~Century of Humiliation,~~" when she fell victim to the colonial powers of Europe, many of whom carved out zones of influence along China's coasts.⁹

China is noted for her ancient military theoreticians and philosophers, from Sun Tzu of the 5th century B.C.E. and Sima Qian of the 1st century B.C.E. to Ban Gu of the 1st century C.E.

and Ouyang Xiu of the 11th century C.E.¹⁰ Yet Chinese society is often described as “Confucianist.” Confucian doctrine viewed war as a necessary evil the country had to rely on to resist invasion, suppress rebellion, and reunify China after periods of division.”¹¹ Indeed, the Confucian ideal of a gentleman included the skills of chariotry and archery. However, the Confucian tradition did not believe in conquest for its own sake, nor in territorial expansion, nor ruling over subject peoples. Imperial-minded emperors usually quickly found themselves opposed by their officials and eventually removed from history.¹² Even during the famous voyages of Zheng He (1371-1433), the goals set for these vast fleets were to further explore Asia and beyond, and to generate trade and gifts of exotic tribute, not to conquer and rule territory.¹³

The PLA at War

In order to understand China’s modern defense strategy, knowledge of China’s history is critical, as highlighted above. The Communist Revolution drew upon nationalist wellsprings and feelings of inferiority engendered by the years of foreign involvement in China and her Century of Humiliation at the hands of Western powers and Japan. As stressed by Ross Terrill, in order to understand China’s view of the world, one must understand that Chinese strategic thinkers attribute the collapse of dynasties in Chinese history to *nei luan* (internal disorder) and *wai huan* (external threat). These twin fears continue to drive Beijing’s policies today.¹⁴

An examination of China’s wars since 1949 will reveal strong echoes of the continuities of the use of military force throughout the broad sweep of Chinese history. China has resorted to some level of military force on a number of occasions since the Communists took power. These consist of Korea (1950-3), in the Taiwan Strait (1954-5, 1958, 1962, and 1995-6), India (1962), the USSR (1969), Vietnam (1965-73, 1974, 1979, and 1988), and the Philippines (since 1995).¹⁵

Many of these actions share common characteristics. The People's Republic of China (PRC) resorted to the use of force as a last resort in most of these cases. In addition, the PRC issued a series of clear warnings before taking any military action. In the case of the Korean War, for example, Mao Zedong stated publicly on September 1, 1950 that China would not tolerate the invasion of a neighbor (North Korea).¹⁶ Two days later, Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai passed a formal warning to the U.S. through Indian diplomatic channels.¹⁷ The U.S. and the UN failed to understand the import of those messages. In the run-up to her 1979 invasion of Vietnam, the PRC issued a series of complaints over what she alleged were cross-border violations by Vietnamese forces, threatening to take unspecified punitive actions. These signals likewise failed to generate a Vietnamese response. (It is also interesting to note that in this offensive operation, the largest carried out by the PRC since the Korean War, the fighting in essence yielded a draw, with heavy losses on both sides. The PLA effort was criticized by analysts as being characterized by poor command and control, faulty logistics (despite limited distances to Chinese national territory), and difficulty in directing large formations in battle.)¹⁸

The wars of the PRC can be seen as trying to further China's attempts to re-establish what one analyst termed ~~the~~ "the proper hierarchy of relations."¹⁹ Some analysts characterize China's defense strategy as a ~~Cult of Defense~~.²⁰ Andrew Scobell lays out three core philosophical elements and six guiding strategic principles for the Cult of Defense. The core elements state that the Chinese are (1) peace-loving, (2) neither aggressive nor expansionist, (3) only willing to use force in self-defense.²¹ The guiding principles for national unity are (1) the primacy of national unification (the core value which cannot be compromised) and (2) heightened threat perceptions a paranoiac siege mentality among the Chinese leadership. The guiding principles for external security are (3) the Just War Theory (wars waged by oppressed

groups against oppressors are just; since China has been oppressed, her wars are just by definition); (4) active defense (which blurs the line between offense and defense); with the guiding principles for internal security (5) chaos phobia (a deep fear of political chaos and instability); and (6) the fact that the community is paramount over the individual.²² Scobell concludes his discussion by stating that the Cult of Defense stresses *realpolitik* but includes a pacifist self-perception regarding defense. He writes, —the defensive-mindedness and preference for nonviolent solutions to interstate disputes are not merely empty rhetoric...but rather a part of a belief system that has been deeply internalized by Chinese civilian and military elite.”²³

China's Defense Strategy

Over the last decade, the PRC has been increasingly open in laying bare her internal discussions on defense policy and detailing her defense strategy. This greater openness has been highlighted by the publication of a series of defense white papers. On the occasion of the release of the 2004 Defense White Paper, China's Xinhua News Agency quoted an official spokesman stressing that the openness is intended to clarify China's defense policy for other countries, placing her current military modernization in the context of a defensive —defense policy [in the aim of] consolidating regional stability, improving [the] security situation in the world, and promoting China's cooperation with different countries in security and related fields.”²⁴ Official Chinese statements promoting the release of the 2008 Defense White Paper stressed that China places —the defense of the nation's sovereign rights, security, territorial integrity, and the protection of the interests of national development and of the people above all else.”²⁵

When China looks out at the world through the prism of her borders, she sees only, at best, potential rivals and, at worst, potential enemies. Even in the past 60 years, China has had

military confrontations with nearly all of the countries on her borders, including with such regional powers as India, the then Soviet Union, South Korea, and Vietnam. Japan remains a major rival and the Japanese-Chinese relationship remains fraught with intense historical sensitivities. China, like many countries in the West, faces challenges from Islamic fundamentalism. She suffers severe environmental degradation and an increasing scarcity of water resources, particularly on the strategic North China plain. Also at home, she faces continuing demographic pressures, as she seeks to expand her remarkable economic development beyond her coastline, in an attempt to spread the benefits of economic development and growth to the hundreds of millions living in the country's interior. Further afield, she is challenged by piracy in South East Asia and off the Horn of Africa, with sea lanes of communication vital for providing the massive quantities of fuel and raw materials needed to feed her sustained economic growth. A key fact to remember about China as she faces these myriad challenges is that she does so virtually alone, being a member of no large alliances, with the possible exception of North Korea, hardly a particularly advantageous relationship for China.

China clearly sees the U.S. as her chief rival in Asia and beyond. As China seeks to recover what she sees as her rightful role in the world, she pursues a range of strategies to confront U.S. power and influence. As detailed in 2005 by Peter Hays Gries, Director of the Sino-American Security Dialogue sponsored by the University of Oklahoma and the Institute for U.S.-China Issues, these include bargaining, binding, and buffering. For example, in recent years, China has sought U.S. diplomatic support to add a China-based terrorist movement to the State Department's list of terrorist organizations in exchange for cooperation in counter-terrorism. China has sought to bind the U.S. by working more closely with the UN, in some cases, relying more heavily on the UN than does the U.S. Her buffering strategy has been

illustrated by her strong push for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) +3 format, as China attempts to balance U.S. power by strengthening an organization in which the U.S. is not a member.²⁶

In analyzing the role of the U.S. in Asia, China could focus on what are known as ~~anti~~“antiaccess strategies,” i.e., limiting an opponent’s ability to continue to have geographic access to large areas in East Asia.²⁷ This would arguably support China’s belief that the U.S. is pursuing a policy of encirclement and containment toward China. One China analyst sees preventing containment from becoming the centerpiece of U.S. China policy as China’s main goal over the last decade.²⁸ However, China’s ability to pursue an antiaccess policy or to respond to a containment policy is limited by the web of alliance relationships which the United States has with many of her neighbors. The U.S. has formal defense treaties with South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and Australia, as well as close relations with other countries in the region, including Taiwan, Singapore, New Zealand, India and Indonesia.²⁹ China would be further hampered in implementing any significant antiaccess policy by the extremely intricate web of economic and commercial relationships she has with the countries that would lie with any potential antiaccess area. Realizing her limited ability for action, China has in recent years been seeking to transform her relationship with the U.S. from ~~one~~“one of subordination and potential rivalry to one of cooperation as well as competition.”³⁰ Within the limits of pursuing her own economic and political interests, China has played down ideological differences in recent years, working more closely with the U.S. on trade issues, environmental protection, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, and even on occasion discussing human rights.³¹ This, of course, does not mean that there will not continue to be disputes over trade issues, economic and financial policy, Taiwan, or territorial claims. After all, such disputes can happen between the closest allies.

Putting China's Current Military Build-up Into Context

It is indisputable that the PRC is currently funding an impressive military build-up. As the Congressional Research Service states, —The PLA is pursuing comprehensive transformation from a mass army designed for protracted wars of attrition on her territory to one capable of fighting and winning short-duration, high-intensity conflicts against high-tech adversaries.”³² The prime policy goal of the Chinese leadership is the continued rule of the Chinese Communist Party. Fear of losing political power is a key driver. In analyzing the Chinese military build-up, it is important to do so in the context of two key Chinese concepts: comprehensive national power (CNP) and the strategic configuration of power. CNP refers to a quantifiable measurement developed by Chinese planners which is based, as specified by the CRS, on measures of territory, natural resources, economic prosperity, diplomatic influence, international prestige, domestic cohesiveness, military capability, and cultural influence. It, in effect, incorporates the U.S. DIME (diplomacy-information-military-economic) concept into more traditional calculations of national power. For the past several decades, the Chinese leadership has made clear its goal of increasing China's CNP ranking. This ties in closely with its strategic configuration of power concept, which posits that the first several decades of the 21st century will be characterized generally by peace and economic development in Asia, giving China a window of opportunity to make substantial progress in her return to great power status.³³

Much of China's modernization efforts center on the military arm best able to project power regionally: the Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). New and more sophisticated weapons systems include anti-ship ballistic missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles, submarines, aircraft carriers, surface combatants, including new destroyer classes, fast attack craft and amphibious ships.³⁴ Procuring such a range of vessels should be seen as normal for any country

which, like China, is becoming increasingly reliant on energy and primary resources from increasingly distant sources. As with any country, China needs to protect her sea lines of communication. However, according to 2009 data in the CIA World Factbook, China spends one-tenth of what the U.S. spends on defense. In 2009, France was still slightly ahead of China in defense spending.³⁵ It seems clear that other powers in Asia and the Pacific and beyond need to adjust to the expected and, from China's perspective, necessary increase in her military assets in Asia. They should be aware that, unlike Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, or, indeed, the British Empire, never in her history has China sought to dominate major portions of the planet.

Walk Softly, Talk, AND.....

In his Senate testimony cited above, then-USCDRPACOM Admiral Timothy Keating summarized the mission of PACOM and provided a laundry list of the many challenges PACOM faces in the Asia-Pacific region. Admiral Keating made the important point that U.S. military force and presence ~~has~~ long been a guarantor of peace and stability in the region.”³⁶ Indeed, it can be argued that China likely welcomes a certain level of U.S. military presence in the region for the same reason expressed by Admiral Keating. It would be hard to imagine a scenario in which the PRC would welcome a complete American military withdrawal from Asia, leaving China alone to balance the power of Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, ASEAN, India and Russia.

In his testimony, Admiral Keating also commented on his desire for improved military-to-military relations with China. He said, ~~im~~proving the interaction between USPACOM and the PLA is critically important—in terms of maintaining stability across the Taiwan Strait and in assuring regional nations.”³⁷ Such contacts are the best way to reduce possible miscalculations, increase mutual understanding, and encourage cooperation between the two sides. Noting that

these contacts fell below his expectations in 2007, Keating tallied high-level visits to the PRC by U.S. officials wherein the PLA provided the visiting delegations with substantial access to sites of interest and during which frank and open bilateral discussions were held. Nevertheless, progress was lacking in carrying out port visits, holding exercises at sea, officer exchanges, and strengthening the official Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) annual talks.³⁸

Building these military-to-military relationships between the U.S. and China will continue to be a challenge. These are two countries that fought each other in a war 60 years ago, a war that was never technically ended. Decades of Cold War and strong anti-communism in the West fed suspicions engendered during China's Century of Humiliation. Nevertheless, it is not only in the interests of the U.S. that these contacts and relationships be expanded. China, as noted above, is returning to her rightful place on the world stage. She is increasingly taking on the responsibilities this change requires. It is important for the U.S. to help further this process, integrating China more closely with international organizations and working cooperatively to address the global and regional challenges many countries are now facing. These steps should be taken in the context of a continued strong and flexible U.S. military presence in the region and awareness of the reality that the U.S. and the PRC are so tightly bound economically that a major war between the two powers could have devastating global consequences.

As indicated by Admiral Keating, military-to-military contacts between the U.S. and the PRC are nothing new. Indeed, they have been happening for many years and are characterized by considerable variety. Going back several decades to the 1980's, relations were particularly close. The two countries were drawn together by the interests of each to play the relevant strategic "card" as a balance to the Soviet Union. The contacts consisted of a strategic dialogue, exchanges in functional areas, and even arms sales. The U.S. agreed to four programs of

government-to-government Foreign Military Sales.³⁹ The 1989 Chinese Tiananmen Square crackdown on peaceful demonstrators brought an end to this honeymoon, even before the collapse of the Soviet Union forever removed the need to play a China Card.

Other subsequent crises continued to affect the restoration of contacts. For her part, the PRC also continued to refuse discussions and cooperation in a number of key areas, including nuclear weapons and cyber threats, showing her reluctance by regularly cancelling visits and resisting port calls. Nevertheless, top U.S. officials continued to stress the importance of these contacts. In a March 7, 2007 press conference, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he did not see China as ~~a~~ “strategic adversary” of the U.S., but as ~~a~~ “partner in some respects” and ~~a~~ “competitor in other respects.”⁴⁰ Later that month, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace stressed at a news conference that the key concern for the U.S.-China bilateral relationship was avoiding ~~miscalculation~~ and misunderstanding based on misinformation.”⁴¹

A Vital and Challenging Task: Advancing U.S.-China Military Relations

The Commander of PACOM is charged with enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific. He is committed to doing so in his vast area of responsibility far from the U.S. mainland. It is to maintain this stability by ~~promoting~~ security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win.”⁴² Resorting to military action should always remain the last option, after all other options have been exhausted. In a region characterized by so many tightly woven inter-relationships, political, economic, cultural, and social, this prescription is even more vital. It would be very difficult to envision any significant U.S.-China military engagement which would not lead to severe devastation and destruction in Asia and far beyond, likely having catastrophic economic impacts

worldwide. It is, therefore, all the more critical to strengthen the military-to-military ties between the U.S. and China, regardless of the difficulties in carrying this out.

The Commander of PACOM will need to use all the resources at his disposal to further this vital policy. Working under the leadership of the U.S. Administration and the Department of Defense, he must draw on all available arms of U.S. power in the region as best he can. He must creatively and effectively tap the U.S. government inter-agency process, connecting with all U.S. departments and agencies with interests in the Asia-Pacific region (and it would be hard to imagine many which would have no interests). He must regularly coordinate with U.S. embassies in the region. He must be familiar with the U.S. multinational corporations with interests in the region, being fully aware that the commercial and economic relationship between our two countries is vital not only for the region but for the world economy. He must be current on the activities of the many international and regional governmental with responsibilities in the region. He must, in his spare time, also be aware of the activities of key non-governmental organizations focused on issues in the Asia-Pacific. No one ever said this was going to be easy.

Fortunately, PACOM has substantial resources to draw upon, both from within its own joint command and from the broader interagency process. In that regard, what follows is a menu of options of how to continue to enhance the military-to-military relations between the United States and the Peoples Republic of China to our mutual benefit. It must here be stressed again that this policy will be neither quick nor easy. As is evident in many theaters and historical contexts, for a superpower, keeping the peace is often a lot harder than winning a war.

A Suggested Menu of Options

Initiatives Led By PACOM

1. PACOM continues to try to arrange exchanges of port calls, perhaps beginning with vessels that are not warships in order to address sensitivities.
2. Within DOD, PACOM explores the possibility of joint training exercises, beginning, perhaps with programs addressing mutual concerns such as disaster response, counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, or other areas.
3. PACOM draws upon the U.S. military's sustainability programs to launch joint dialogues on environmental issues such as reducing carbon footprints, protecting the health of military personnel, or climate issues.⁴³
4. Planners in PACOM lead an effort within the USG to expand and diversify military exchange programs, drawing largely on the U.S. war colleges, regardless of whether China immediately reciprocates (such programs are invaluable for increasing common understanding).
5. CDRUSPACOM regularly attends at recurring dialogues such as the annual Strategic and Economic Dialogue a regular event.⁴⁴
6. PACOM units seek U.S. military participation in Chinese air shows, drawing on U.S. precision flying teams and others.
7. PACOM works with U.S. Defense Attaches throughout the Asia-Pacific to ensure that visiting PACOM officers are hosted for representational events during their visits to these countries and that PRC officials are always invited to these events.
8. Top PACOM leadership should routinely attend major receptions hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and, where possible, U.S. consulates throughout the PRC and such invitations by the State Department should be routine.
9. PACOM should seek to provide U.S. military bands and other performers for these events, allowing them sufficient time to be available to offer other concerts in China where possible.

USG Level Initiatives (with direct PACOM support)

1. The USG, with direct PACOM support, expands and strengthens the talks under the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), exploring the relevance of the 1972 US-USSR Incidents-at-Sea Agreement (INCSEA), generally viewed as a particularly successful model of naval confidence-building measures.⁴⁵
2. The USG continues and expands the U.S.-China Consultative Talks, resumed in February 2009, and ensures that PACOM leadership participates.⁴⁶
3. The USG increases engagements with China through the means of international organizations, such as through ASEAN or the ASEAN Regional Forum and PACOM is a key player in the U.S. delegation.⁴⁷
4. The USG and PACOM carry out regular tests of the Defense Telephone Link hotline established in 2008, perhaps establishing a similar linkage at the combatant commander level as well.⁴⁸ PACOM oversees exchanges of air traffic controllers (the PLA on the Chinese side with PACOM coordinating with the FAA on the U.S. side).⁴⁹
5. The USG and PACOM continue and expand contacts and exchanges between the U.S. Coast Guard and China's Maritime Safety Administration.⁵⁰
6. USG scientific agencies explore potential scientific maritime research projects, relying upon U.S. government research vessels and related resources, in direct coordination with PACOM.

CONCLUSION

Throughout history, whenever a nation increases its strength and influence on the global level, other major powers must adjust. China is recovering from nearly two centuries of disruption and decline and is reasserting the major influential role it has had throughout much of history. This period of Chinese recovery will challenge the world's major powers, including the

United States. The U.S. will need to spend great effort in doing everything with its power to ensure that China's return to the world stage is peaceful. The U.S. must maintain a strong presence in East and Southeast Asia, not only military but diplomatic, economic and even cultural. The competition with China will be difficult and at times tense. However, China and the U.S. have many interests in common. The key is to continue to build on those interests through a competition in which both the two countries, and the world, benefit. A war between the world's two top economic powers would make the recent "Great Recession" look like a trial run for global economic catastrophe.

¹ U.S. PACOM, "Strategy: Partnership Readiness Presence," April 2009, p.3.

² Ibid.

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